

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An array of erasable re-programmable non-volatile memory cells formed across at least a portion of a semiconductor substrate, comprising:

a two-dimensional array of spaced apart stacks of self-aligned elements including a gate dielectric layer on a surface of the substrate, a conductive floating gate on the gate dielectric, an inter-gate dielectric layer on the floating gate and a conductive control gate on the inter-gate dielectric,

isolation trenches formed in the substrate between and surrounding the individual stacks, and

at least a first set of elongated conductors extending across the stacks in contact with control gates thereof and protruding into spaces between the floating gates of adjacent stacks.

2. The array of claim 1, additionally comprising a second set of elongated conductors extending across the stacks and into spaces between the floating gates of adjacent stacks, whereby the conductors provide shielding between floating gates of adjacent stacks.

3. The array of claim 2, wherein the first and second sets of elongated conductors are arranged perpendicularly with each other across the array, whereby the conductors provide shielding around all sides of the stack.

4. The array of claim 1, additionally comprising select transistors formed in trenches adjacent the stacks that include gates within the trenches formed of ends of the portions of the first set of elongated conductors protruding into the spaces.

5. The array of claim 1, additionally comprising select transistors formed in trenches adjacent the stacks that include gates within the trenches that are coupled with portions of the first set of elongated conductors protruding into the spaces through layers of tunnel dielectric therebetween.

6. An array of erasable re-programmable non-volatile memory cells formed across at least a portion of a semiconductor substrate, comprising:

a two-dimensional array of pillars that are rectangularly shaped in plan view across the substrate and which are individually formed of elements with their four edges self-aligned with one another including a gate dielectric layer on a surface of the substrate, a conductive floating gate on the gate dielectric, an inter-gate dielectric layer on the floating gate and a conductive control gate on the inter-gate dielectric,

trenches formed in the substrate between and surrounding the individual pillars, under spaces between them,

a first plurality of parallel gate conductors extending across the array in a first direction in contact with the control gates of the pillars over which they pass and extending into the spaces between floating gates of adjacent pillars in the first direction, and

a second plurality of parallel gate conductors extending across the array in a second direction, the first and second directions being orthogonal with each other, the second gate conductors being insulated from the first gate conductors and extending into the spaces between floating gates of adjacent pillars and coupled with select gates of transistors positioned in trenches between at least some of the pillars in the second direction.

7. The array of claim 6, additionally comprising source and drain ion implants in the substrate trenches between others than said at least some of the pillars in the second direction.

8. The array of claim 7, additionally comprising a plurality of parallel bit line conductors extending across the array within the trenches in the first direction in contact with the source and drain ion implants.

9. The array of claim 7, wherein a path is provided within the substrate for programming electrons to accelerate upward adjacent side walls of trenches not containing one of the source and drain ion implants and into the floating gates positioned between the trenches.

10. The array of claim 7, wherein the source and drain ion implants are elongated in the first direction past a plurality of the pillars.

11. The array of claim 10, additionally comprising a plurality of parallel bit line conductors extending across the array within the trenches in the first direction in contact with the elongated source and drain ion implants.

12. The array of claim 6, wherein the select gates are formed integrally with the second gate conductors.

13. The array of claim 6, wherein the select gates are coupled with the second gate conductors through a layer of tunnel dielectric sandwiched between them.

14. The array of claim 6, wherein the inter-gate dielectric includes a layer of silicon nitride surrounded on both sides by layers of silicon dioxide.

15. The array of claim 6, wherein the pillars have their sidewalls oriented perpendicularly with the substrate surface.

16. The array of claim 6, wherein the trenches have depths within a range of 400 to 800 nanometers.

17. The array of claim 6, additionally comprising dielectric within the trenches between the select gates and bottoms of the trenches that is thicker than dielectric between the second plurality of gate conductors and edges of the floating gates.

18. An array of erasable re-programmable non-volatile memory cells formed across at least a portion of a semiconductor substrate, comprising:

a two-dimensional array of pillars that are rectangularly shaped in plan view across the substrate and which are individually formed of elements with their four edges self-aligned with one another including a gate dielectric layer on a surface of the substrate, a conductive floating gate on the gate dielectric, an inter-gate dielectric layer on the floating gate and a conductive control gate on the inter-gate dielectric,

trenches formed in the substrate between and surrounding the individual pillars, under spaces between them,

a first plurality of parallel gate conductors extending across the array in a first direction in contact with the control gates of the pillars over which they pass and extending into the spaces between floating gates of adjacent pillars in the first direction, and

a second plurality of parallel gate conductors extending across the array in a second direction, the first and second directions being orthogonal with each other, the second gate conductors being insulated from the first gate conductors and extending into the spaces between floating gates of adjacent pillars in the second direction,

source and drain ion implants in the substrate between adjacent pillars at the bottom of a first set of alternate trenches extending across the array in the second direction, and

select transistors including select gates positioned between adjacent pillars and within a second set of alternate trenches extending across the second direction, the first and second sets of alternate trenches being distinct from each other, the select gates being coupled with the portion of the second gate conductors extending into the spaces between adjacent pillars,

thereby providing an array of memory cells that individually include two source and drain ion implants and a select transistor therebetween in the second direction.

19. The array of claim 18, additionally comprising a plurality of parallel bit line conductors extending across the array within the trenches in the first direction in contact with the source and drain ion implants.

20. The array of claim 18, wherein the source and drain ion implants are elongated in the first direction past a plurality of the pillars.

21. The array of claim 20, additionally comprising a plurality of parallel bit line conductors extending across the array within the trenches in the first direction in contact with the elongated source and drain ion implants.

22. The array of claim 18, wherein the select gates are formed integrally with the second gate conductors.

23. The array of claim 18, wherein the select gates are coupled with the second gate conductors through a layer of tunnel dielectric sandwiched between them.

24. An array of erasable re-programmable non-volatile memory cells formed across at least a portion of a semiconductor substrate, comprising:

a rectangular array of charge storage elements formed across a surface of the substrate, trenches formed into the substrate between at least some of the charge storage elements, elongated control gates extending across charge storage elements and having portions extending down between them, and

select transistor gates positioned within at least some of the trenches and coupled with the downward extending control gate portions through a layer of tunnel dielectric sandwiched between them.

25. The array of claim 24, wherein the charge storage elements are conductive floating gates.

26. The array of claim 24, wherein the layer of tunnel dielectric has a thickness within a range of 0.5 – 4 nm.

27. The array of claim 24, that additionally comprises layers of dielectric between the select transistor gates and bottoms of the trenches that are thicker than layers of dielectric between the control gates and the charge storage elements.

28. A method of forming an array of erasable re-programmable non-volatile memory cells across at least a portion of a semiconductor substrate, comprising:

forming a first layer of dielectric across at least the array portion of a surface of the substrate,

forming a first layer of conductive material over the first dielectric layer across at least the array portion,

forming a second layer of dielectric material over the first conductive material layer,

forming a second layer of conductive material over the second dielectric layer, anisotropically etching a first set of channels through the first and second layers of conductive material, the first and second layers of dielectric material and into the substrate surface to form trenches therein, said first set of channels and trenches being elongated in one direction across the array portion and spaced apart in a second direction across the array portion, the first and second directions being orthogonal with each other,

thereafter anisotropically etching a second set of channels through the first and second layers of conductive material, the first and second layers of dielectric material and into the substrate surface to form trenches therein, said second set of channels and trenches being elongated in the second direction across the array portion and spaced apart in the first direction across the array portion,

thereby to leave an array of pillars across the array portion surrounded by the first and second sets of channels and trenches, and

thereafter forming one set of conductors that extend across and contact the second layer of conductive material remaining as part of the pillars, said one set of conductors being elongated in the first direction and spaced apart in the second direction.

29. The method of claim 28, further comprising thereafter forming a second set of conductors that extend across said one set of conductors with dielectric therebetween, said second set of conductors being elongated in the second direction and spaced apart in the first direction.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein forming each of the one and second set of conductors includes extending said conductors into the channels between adjacent pillars to at least an extent that shields floating gates of adjacent pillars from each other in both the first and second directions.

31. The method of claim 29, further comprising, prior to forming the second set of conductors, implanting ions in the trenches at locations between at least some of the pillars along the second direction, thereby to form source and drain regions.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein forming the second set of conductors includes extending the second set of conductors into the trenches in positions between at least some the pillars along the second direction in which source and drain regions have not been formed and with dielectric therebetween, thereby to isolate floating gates of adjacent pillars from one another in the second direction and to serve as select transistor gates.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein forming said one set of conductors includes extending the one set of conductors into the channels between floating gates of adjacent pillars in the first direction, thereby to isolate floating gates of adjacent pillars from one another in the first direction.